FROM: P. O. Box 9007
Berkeley, CA 94709 USA

First Class

To:

Express Ads

RIDE THE 4449! Tickets available Los Angeles to Portland or between intermediate points on this Amtrak Steam Special over the scenic Coast & Shasta Routes. GREAT WESTERN TOURS, 639 Market Street, San Francisco 94105. (415) 398-2994.

YOU'RE INVITED--MEXICO RAILFAN FUN-TRAIN--July 17-31, 1977--Copper Canyon, Taxco, Acapulco, Mexico City, Guadalajara, Metro, Street Cars, locomotive ride, join anywhere (trip starts in Oklahoma), Mexico cool in summer--write MIDWEST TRAVEL SERVICE, 2936R Bella Vista, Midwest City, OK, 73110--Phone 405-732-0566.

Railroad, Traction, Trolleys, Airlines, Shipping, Expositions and Americana uniform buttons. Stamp for list. J. Lajoie, 22 Stevens, Methuen, Mass. 01844.

UNIQUE PUBLIC TIMETABLE GRAB BAGS, all material 1940s. $25 worth only $16. Also have the finest clear plastic slip covers for public TTs ever offered, 8¢ each, 100?$7.50, 200/$14, 500/$30 postpd. Tom Coval, 21 E.Robin Rd, Holland PA 18966.

To know more about the New Haven Railroad and its predecessor roads, right into Penn Central and Conrail, then the NEW HAVEN RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY is what you want to join. $6.00 per year brings membership card & 6 large issues of the "NH NEWSLETTER". Sample $1. 1253 South Main Street, Fall River, MA 02724.

Some Official Registers of Passenger Train Equipment between 1950 thru 1971 for sale. SASE for date & prices. L.K. Hill, 163 Moffat, Waban, Mass. 02168.

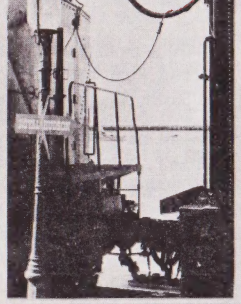
RTN ADVERTISING RATES: Express Ads $1 per line of 80 spaces. Display ads $25 per half-page (maximum size--4x5 inches); $12.50 quarter page (camera-ready). Write: MESSAGE MEDIA, Ad Dept., Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709. Thank you!

SUBSCRIBE TO RAIL TRAVEL NEWS! One year--24 issues, delivered by first class mail--costs just $9. Write today to: MESSAGE MEDIA - RTN, P.O. Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709. You'll be glad you did!

Read 4-11-77 40¢

RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

VOL. 7 NO. 6
SECOND ISSUE OF
MARCH 1977
#150



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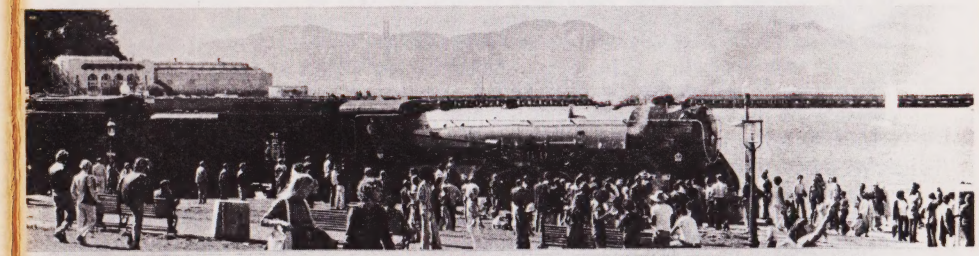

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Rail Canada

CANADIAN TRANSPORT COMMISSION late in March approved the discontinuation of service on 7 rail runs: CN's tri-weekly RDC Winnipeg-Thunder Bay; a weekly mixed train Dauphin, Man., to Winnipegosis (CN); daily RDC on CP Rail Sudbury-Sault Ste. Marie; CN tri-weekly mixed train Prince Alberta-Hudson Bay; CN daily RDC Edmonton-Grand Centre; daily CN RDC Edmonton-North Battleford; CN daily RDC Quebec City-Clemont. It also permitted CPR's tri-weekly Montreal-Mont Laurier service to be reduced to twice weekly. In addition, the CTC ordered continued in the public interest these two CN routes: Edmonton-Drumheller and Jasper-Prince Rupert.

CANADIAN CONSUMER GROUP Transport 2000 announced that it will appeal two CN cutbacks--discontinuance of Edmonton-North Battleford and Edmonton-Grand Centre runs approved Mar 21 by the CTC. Transport 2000 said that support must be gathered by Apr 21 in order for a request for a year's extension to be made. This would give time for operation of the runs under VIA Rail Canada and potential ridership increases to be manifest. Transport 2000's address is Box 300, Terminal A, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 8V3.

CN'S SUPER CONTINENTAL will retain virtually the same schedule this summer, with Montreal departure at 9:20pm, and Vancouver arrival at 7:40am (instead of present 8:30am. It will leave Vancouver at 8:55pm (instead of present 8:30), and will reach Montreal at 10:25am instead of 10:00.

AIRLINE FARE INCREASES of up to 7% on CP Air and Air Canada were approved recently by the CTC. Air Canada's president told the Calgary Chamber of Commerce in March that the federal government will protect the airlines from fuel shortages in the future, noting that airlines use only 3% of all petroleum in Canada, and that air travel is "essential" to Canadians. Air Canada's fuel cost it $190 million in 1976--20% of its total operating costs, he said.

CANADIAN NATIONAL ADVERTISES in the U.S. 6-day Maple Leaf Explorer's Tours to Hudson Bay. See travel agents.

Mount Stephen behind "Skyline Dome" car on CP's CANADIAN on a bleak February day. Photo by Glenn Lee.

Urban-Suburban

HAS THE HIGHWAY lobby gotten to President Carter? The Wall Street Journal reported on Mar 29 that the President sent a hand-written note to Transportation Secretary Brock Adams warning him in effect to go slow on funding transit systems, especially new rail systems, and to continue the previous administration's conservative policies on transit. Said Carter, "I suspect that many of the rapid-transit systems are grossly over-designed." He urged Adams to emphasize bus lanes, streetcars and shifts in auto patterns to help solve city transit problems. Adams had been fairly outspoken previously about the future of mass transit, with statements such as: "We're in the interim period between the automobile culture and whatever else is coming... Cars with greater fuel efficiency, cars for short trips powered by electricity, the development of cost-effective alternative fuels, mass transit systems that will attract people from their cars, and cities which are designed around mass transit." The idea of cities designed around mass transit may have hit highway lobbyists hard, for Carter's note was a definite warning that costs must be held down. The Journalquoted a DOT official as saying that some rail systems such as BART and the Washington Metro "have been overdesigned in certain respects"--meaning spacious platforms, escalators and cars. Carter also mentioned people movers--that favorite of Ford Motor Co. and the Nixon administration--as being a good alternative to BART-type systems. The paper said Carter told Adams to urge cities to build one transit line at a time, not a whole system such as BART did. It was suspected that Carter's words were meant largely to refer to Los Angeles, the major stumbling block remaining to converting to the post-automobile era, and a city in which major decisions still must be made concerning ways to encourage lessened automobile use.

WHY DID SECRETARY Adams recently testify against a bill that would have added $2.35 billion to UMTA's grant authorizations? According to Railway Age columnist Jack Burke's analysis (Mar 14) it was a shrewd move on the part of Adams to move toward a "consolidated transportation account" that would break the highway trust fund and put all transportation money in one pot--one of the major aims of the new DOT Secretary. The bill he testified against would have tended to perpetuate the highway trust fund.

Transit

PHILADELPHIA TRANSIT WORKERS went on strike Mar 25, forcing about 400,000 SEPTA riders to seek alternate means of commuting, in a strike that is expected to last a long time. ConRail lines were running normally, and crowded with extra riders.

CHICAGO ELEVATED CRASH of Feb 4 that killed 11 persons will have its final report issued in 6 months. It was revealed that the motorman of the train that hit the rear of another had been suspended 6 times since 1968 for violations of safety rules. Chicago's CTA is installing safety barriers to try to prevent elevated trains from falling to the ground.

THE ROCK ISLAND will increase commuter service to Chicago's southwest suburbs in April, while cutting back on South Side runs.

THE CHESSIE SYSTEM would be willing to give up an old railroad tunnel in Washington for possible use for a Metro extension to be proposed later this year, an extension that would run from Union Station past a number of major congressional buildings. The new line would be of special benefit to congressmen and tourists.

CHICAGO'S VALPARAISO TRAIN (we don't know if it's still running as we go to press) has been operating with equipment off the recently discontinued ConRail Cleveland-Youngstown line.

BOSTON RADIO STATION WEEI-FM has a weekday morning Mass Transit Report at 5:40. The MBTA's LRV streetcars are still coming--20 of them have been officially accepted, after a 2-month delivery lull due to winter weather. Two-car LRV trains are now running on the Riverside line.

TRANSIT TIMETABLE COLLECTORS will note that ConRail printed a final Boston schedule dated Mar 1, form 71, 3rd edition--a special last-minute order made with CR on condition that CR distribute it to suburban stations rather than sending it out of Philadelphia.

THE PHILADELPHIA SEPTA and Seattle's Metro have agreed to join in a joint purchase of 173 new trackless trolleys for $14 million from AM-General. Philadelphia will get 100 and Seattle 63.

UNCONFIRMED AMTRAK SCHEDULE CHANGES expected Apr 24: NATIONAL LTD lv Kansas City 7am, ar NY 2:10pm; lv NY 6:10pm, ar K.C. 11:05pm. BROADWAY LTD lv Chicago 7:30am, ar NY 4:17pm; lv NY 2:32pm, ar Chicago 8:30am.

CARS & CONSISTS

*INTER-AMERICAN, train 21, Little Rock Mar 22: engine 598; cars 6001 (buffer car), 1180, 1198, dome 9201 "Starlight Dome", 8322, 5643, 4846 (first dome used on train?) Train 22, St. Louis Mar 16: engine 596; cars 5454 (buffer), 1198, 1411, 2381, 8151, 5643, 4846, 5804, 5606 (psgrs had to change trains there).

*NATIONAL LIMITED, train 31, Effingham Mar 16: engines ConRail 6021, Atk 401; cars 2292 (buffer), 1192, 1039, 2608, 2707, 8340, 5649, 5432, (deadhead from Beech Grove:) 3338, 4813, 8153. Train 31, New York Mar 14: engine 902 (402 & 470 on at Harrisburg; 642 on at St. Louis); cars 5416 (buffer), 1059 (to Dallas), 1150 & 2614 "Pacific Heights" (to L.A.), 2686, 8081 "Birmingham", 5440, 5429, 5433 (to Pittsburgh); 5665 added at Washington. Train 31, Kansas City Mar 29: engines 439, 420, 451 (E's); cars 6072 (buffer), 1029, 1039, 2614 "Pacific Heights", 2705 "Winter Haven", 8013, 5423, 5412, (for tour group on #30 of Mar 30 KC-DC:) 6022, 5805.

*RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR, D&RGW train 17, Glenwood Springs Mar 24: engines 3089 (GP40), 5771 (F9A), 5763 (F9B), heater car 253; cars 1231 combine, dome coaches "Silver Colt", "S. Bronco", "S. Pony", diner "S. Banquet", obs. "Silver Sky", business car "Wilson McCarthy."

*AUTO-TRAIN (from Lorton), Sanford Mar 20: engines 4002, 4009; cars 203, 305, 304, 594, 806, 512, 520, 903, 702, 706, 540, 514, 522, 596, 804, 709, 704, 201, 205, 631, office car 1, power car; auto carriers not recorded. AUTO-TRAIN/FLORIDIAN, Atk #56, Jacksonville Mar 20: A-T engines 4010, 4002; Atk cars 5653, 5441, 5480, 8322, 2782, 3220 (used as baggage); A-T cars 599, 598, 908, 705, 602, Atk power car 1917, five auto carriers. Engine 346 on at Louisville. Arrived Chicago 2hrs late.

*BROADWAY LIMITED, train 40, Mar 22: engines EL 3607 (SD45), Atk 412 & 427; cars 1156, 1186, 5257, 5433, 2621, 2021, 5265, 5444, 5242, 3402, 8806, 8807, 3205, 2804, 2401, ConRail office car 3. CR engine 2663 added at Ft. Wayne (trouble with 3607). Latter two replaced by CR 2300 probably at Pittsburgh. Train 40, Chicago, Mar 10: engines 440 (E8A), 471 (E9B), 428 (E9A); cars 1107, 1046, 5802, 5258, 2022 "Silver Rest", 5265, 5253, 3402, 8088 "Tarboro", 3205 "Gulf Stream", 2804 "Angel Island", 2401 "Bad Axe River."

*COAST STARLIGHT, train 11, San Jose Apr 1: engines 567, 516 (new paint); cars 2252 "Star Leaf" (buffer), 1161, 1501, 4460, 4857, 4531, 4535, 4480, 4865, 4500, 3351, 8075, 2631 "Pacific Scene", 2501 "Blue Grove", (deadhead to L.A.:) 2731 "Pine Ring", 1379 ex-US Army, Amcoaches 21827, 21828.

*PANAMA LIMITED, train 58, Jackson MS Mar 25: engines 558 (SDP), 710 (P30); cars 1350, 21817, 20226 (Amdinette), 21113, 21207.

*FOLLOWING AMTRAK CARS were at New Orleans as of Mar 25 for repair: 5264, 5443, 5452, 5473, 5603, 5607, 5628, 5686, 6048, 6082, 6090, 6404, 6433, 6434, 6435, 6442, 6443, 6447, 6800, 6801, 6802, 6810, 7200, 2261, 2264, 2269, 2532, 2554, 2560, 2629, 3339, 3345, 3361, 9224, 9350.

*SAN DIEGANS, trains 772 & 775, Mar 27: engines 507 (SDP), 224 (F40); cars 21149, 20212, 21135, 21150, 21146, 21137, 20025, 21148, 21136, 21145, 1367.

*NORTH COAST HIAWATHA, train 9, Chicago Mar 15: engines 578, 576; cars 8350, 4893, dome 9465, 1370, 1006, SP 6733.

*MINUTE MAN, train 170, Boston Mar 21: engine 212 (F40); cars 20113 (Amclub), 21809, 21189, 21035, 20001 (Amcafe), 21131, 21813, 1374.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"Even if we had enough energy and materials to last forever, no matter how we lived, big cars would still be wrong for America in the future. They would still consume too much space--cluttering our streets, highways, parking lots and driveways. They would still...present the spectacle of clogged rush-hour freeways with millions of big, six-passenger cars holding a lone, impatient occupant."

--American Motors Chairman Roy D. Chapin Jr. in speech to American Newspaper Publishers Association, Mar 31.

ALL-WEATHER TRANSPORTATION: A WINTER RIDE ON THE NATIONAL

by Bill Benswanger

With the worst of the cold-weather delays apparently in the immediate past, I boarded a Long Island train in mid-February at Hempstead for the first leg of a trip back to my home in Pittsburgh. East of Jamaica, PNC hood units were much in evidence; GP7s,GP9s, and at least one Paducah rebuild. At Sunnyside, BAR Geep 69 was visible, along with GG-1 921 bearing its unique "U.S. Savings Bonds" logo, and also G-motor 904 on the ready track.

The platofrm at Penn Station was active shortly before the NATIONAL LIMITED's departure, with Metroliners moving in and out, Florida consists awaiting departure to Sunnyside, and #31 preparing to have its head end cars and power attached. A newly-assigned NJ-DOT GG-1 (#4874) in terminal switcher service backed in baggage cars 1186 and 1196, with sleeper 2370 "Regal Town," far from its home Santa Fe territory, cut in as a deadhead in front of the baggage cars. The balance of the consist included sleeper 2633, with its name of "Pacific Skies" missing from the board; 2242 "Homestead"; diner 8026; and coaches 5426, 5408, and 5655.

At 12:48, 3 minutes late, the big GG-1 (#904) eased the train into the tunnel and under the Hudson River. After a brief, unexplained stop near Kearney, we were into Newark, then on our way again. Lunch thru Trenton was excellent--a perfectly done veal cutlet, and the service reminiscent (as was the apple pie) of the old "Standard" PRR days. No. 5655 was a very warm coach, and the rear vestibule not only provided great visibility but fresh air as well, with the welcome sprinkle of train steam blowing onto the platform.

The coaches were jammed leaving North Philadelphia, about 12 minutes off schedule. Slowly thru the maze at Zoo Interlocking and thru the "Pittsburgh Subway" with increasing speed past the 44th and 52nd Street yards, graced by Paducah rebuild GP8 5725 (ex-PC/P&E 5614) resplendent in ConRail blue, as well as a long string of new ConRail ore jennies. At Coatesville we overtook a westbound merchandiser headed by a brace of dusty E44s, and were out of Lancaster before the freight could catch us.

The frozen Susquehanna on this sunny day appeared surprisingly soon, and we eased into Harrisburg only about 30 minutes late; no restrictions on electrified trackage; but here 904 left us and SDP40Fs 597 and 613 were cut in. No Washington connection this day, so the stop was a short one. There are always things to see near the Harrisburg engine terminal; this day the highlights were the big GM 10,000-hp electric 1976, minus its companion SDs and dynamometer car; the two E40s (4973 and 4977) on the dead line apparently awaiting their fate, and an eastbound freight with a more-interesting-than-usual lashup in these ConRail days: a blue CR Geep trailed by CNW and SP units. Crossing Rockville bridge, one thought the ice below was thick enough to carry the weight of our two SDP40Fs--something much of the country's trackage is apparently unable to do.

With dusk falling, there was time for visiting with Allegheny Division trainman Bill Rafferty, who spent some time perusing my copy of RTN, and was sufficiently impressed to decide to subscribe. Then into the diner for a delicious steak dinner with wine and the trimmings. At Tyrone we were exactly one hour late to the minute, but perhaps not so badly off as that. Shortly before, between Lewistown and Huntingdon, we had passed the eastbound NATIONAL running 4 1/2 hours late!

At Altoona it was goodbye to Bill Rafferty and back to the rear for the long, familiar climb to the crest of the Alleghenies. Around every other

bend, the lights of Altoona appeared, constantly receding in the now cold and frosty air. Light snow was falling as we glided around Bennington and Horseshoe Curves. It was back inside the coach as we clicked across the crossovers and into Gallitzin Tunnel, then heavy traffic in both directions as we eased down past MO Tower and past the Cresson engine terminal, crammed with helper sets on this Sunday night.

The Johnstown stop was delayed for a few moments as we helped a handicapped young lady to the platform, with trainman M. A. Oliver scooping her up in his arms and setting her gently down in the light snow. Then on our way again; incredibly we managed to lose 7 minutes on the scheduled 11-minute stretch between Latrobe and Greensburg! Finally came the long downhill into Pittsburgh, an hour and 15min late--but one more surprise was in store. Having made it all the way from New York with "priority," the NATIONAL went in the hole at PITT Tower, less than 500 feet from the station stop at Pittsburgh, while an eastbound trailer train coming off the Fort Wayne bridge cut in front of us to pick up the eastbound main. Another 8-10 minutes lost!

With the help of coach attendant Ms. P. Byrne, a constant ray of sunshine throughout the journey, we assisted another handicapped lady from the train and into a waiting wheelchair. As the yard switcher coupled on to coach 5655 to set it out to await its return run on No. 30 the following morning, we pulled our collars up against the cold and snow and trudged into the station. With a few more hours added to the running time, No. 30 might yet make it thru St. Louis and into Kansas City before another day had passed.

EDITORIAL: NEED FOR A NEW AMTRAK DIVISION

It seems to us that it would be in the best interests of American rail travel if a new division within Amtrak were formed for the purpose of handling 403-B type trains that would be difficult to justify within the present Amtrak operational system and/or accounting system.

The motivation for this idea stems from the difficulty that state and regional areas have found in getting needed rail service initiated. After the energy crisis of 1973 hit, many petitions for local train service were submitted to Amtrak, many more than the corporation could handle. And many more undoubtedly were not submitted not because of lack of need but simply because planners were realistically pessimistic about the prospects of Amtrak funding of the runs. Amtrak turned down many of these requests because of an equipment shortage. Now that a good supply of Amfleet cars is available, there is a surplus of conventional cars that Amtrak doesn't wish to use. These could supply the equipment basis for badly needed new runs in many locales.

The major remaining problem is Amtrak must justify new routes on the basis of their financial and operational relationship to the nationwide system. But what about needed local trains that don't necessarily make a contribution to the integrated national network? An example might be the proposed San Francisco-Monterey CA train, the DEL MONTE. It would hardly connect physically with the rest of the Amtrak system, and its scheduling might not permit connections with other Amtrak trains. Nevertheless, there is a local demand for the train, but the Amtrak law as it is written frustrates the initiation of such local services.

The writers of the Amtrak legislation didn't mean to inhibit train service in the U.S. If local services don't fit Amtrak requirements, they should be separated from them in some way--in a different rail organization, in a different division of Amtrak, or simply in a different Amtrak accounting category that didn't affect the overall status of the national system.

RIDING THE LAST D&H ADIRONDACK
by Stephen Linde

The New York-Montreal day train, the ADIRONDACK, made its last northbound run with Delaware & Hudson equipment from Albany on Feb 28. The connecting Turboliner from New York was late, and we were further delayed at Watervliet while we waited for the southbound train to pass. I did not mind the delay, as I was there to enjoy the amenities of the ADIRONDACK before its replacement by Turboliners the following day.

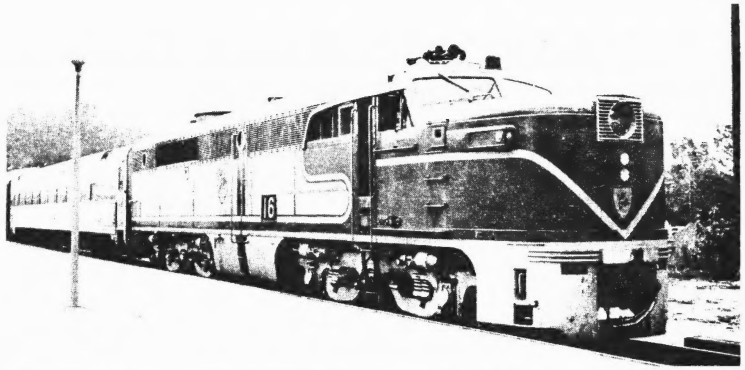
The D&H provided a full consist for the last run. Engines PA 18 & 19 were followed by a dome, the diner-lounge "Adirondack Lodge," and two coaches including the refurbished "Schroon Lake." Two leg-rest coaches were in the consist, but not used because the weekday crowd did not justify opening them. Patronage was not bad for a Monday on a train that had received no promotion. The lounge was equipped with several comfortable chairs, and magazines were provided. Music was piped in during most of the trip. Some dome windows were dirty, but it was still possible to enjoy the view. Photographs of scenes from the Adirondack region were on the walls of the diner, lounge, and "Schroon Lake" coach. Souvenir packets were offered to the passengers. The cars were kept clean inside and outside at all times.

Many passengers rode in the dome at the beginning of the trip, but by Whitehall there were only a few left. After Whitehall the spectacular scenery appeared. As the train twisted thru the mountains, we appreciated the beauty of Lake Champlain, and the Green Mountains were visible in the background. Much of the right of way was blasted out of rock, and the train passes thru two tunnels. At the entrance to the Ticonderoga tunnel, we observed huge icicles hanging from the rocks, a sight that can be truly appreciated only from a dome.

By 6pm darkness made viewing impossible, so I entered the dining car, where the D&H crew were serving dinner for the last time. Many passengers ordered the halibut steak with blue cheese sauce; a few chose the ham steak. The main course was complemented by chicken rice soup and ice cream. The service was outstanding, as the D&H personnel were always ready to serve passengers in a courteous and friendly manner. They even wrote the orders themselves, sparing us the task of filling out the checks as we do on other Amtrak trains.

The crew members admitted that they faced an uncertain future as Amtrak employees. A waitress remarked that they had been sent to "Turboschool," and that they all passed. There was unanimity in the opinion that it is better to work in a dining car than behind the "cafe" counter pushing buttons on the microwave oven. But they, along with Jim Champlin, Manager of Special Services for the D&H, who was aboard that day, seemed resigned about the fate of their train.

The major topic of conversation among the passengers was the replacement of the D&H equipment with Turboliners. The consensus was that the change would be a mistake. It was pointed out that the Turbo is good for short trips, but is not capable of providing the amenities needed for the ADIRONDACK's 9-hour ride, particularly lounge and dining service. I mentioned that the Turbo was designed for high speeds on flat ground; the ADIRONDACK, however, travels at low speeds thru mountains. And of course nobody wanted to lose the dome. It was noted that the arrival of Amfleet next fall will bring the incongruity of tiny windows on the most scenic route in the Northeast.



D&H Alco PA No. 16 pulls train 69 at Albany, New York. Photo by Jack Ferry.

After we crossed the St. Lawrence, the lights in the dome were turned off so we could view the brightly-lighted Montreal skyline. We finally arrived at Windsor Station almost 2 hours late. Those of us who would be returning the following morning checked into the Windsor Hotel.

On March 1 the train left promptly at 8:15am. Many of the passengers boarding at Montreal came to ride the D&H cars for the last time. The sky was clear and we were able to enjoy in daylight the ascent of the mountain, the Willsboro tunnel, and the sun reflecting off Lake Champlain.

Ironically, the train was delayed at Mechanicville while we waited for the Turbo, making its first northbound run from Albany, to pass. This caused us to miss the connection to New York, but provided an opportunity to take a long last look at the train, thank Mr. Champlin and the crew for an excellent trip, and finally watch the consist disappear over the bridge. The hostess, Barbara, shouted, "Where are they going with my diner?" That is a good question, as it is surely a waste of resources not to use equipment in such good condition.

We can only hope that the State of New York will realize that it is ridiculous to run short-distance equipment on a long-distance route, and reverse the unfortunate decision to run Turbos and Amfleet to Montreal. The amenities offered on the D&H ADIRONDACK were not luxuries; they are necessities on such a route. And if the train had been advertised, large numbers of passengers would have been attracted to this high quality service. Yet its existence remained virtually unknown, especially in the New York City area, which is its natural market.

I know that older conventional equipment breaks down. I discovered that when I rode from Montreal to New York last year without a dining car (see RTN, 1st Sept 1976). But the solution to this problem is to rewire the cars in good condition for electric power, purchase new cars capable of providing the amenities offered on the D&H ADIRONDACK, or a combination of both.

Rail travel in the Northeast has taken a step toward mediocrity with the downgrading of the ADIRONDACK. The Turbo brings esthetic uniformity, an abundance of plastic, and a food service that is nothing more than a glorified snack bar. And the Amfleet with its small windows is worse. The maintenance of the D&H's identity on the ADIRONDACK was a refreshing change from the standard appearance of Amtrak trains. The pride that the personnel and the railroad had for the train resulted in an operation with which the passenger must be extremely impressed. The equipment provided a setting for passengers to meet each other and talk, and was conducive to a very pleasant general experience. I think that the loss of the D&H ADIRONDACK represents nothing less than a decline in the overall quality of life in the state of New York.

FROM TRINIDAD TO MONTREAL: SURPRISES OF 1977 RAIL TRAVEL

by Carl H. Fowler

I have just returned from a sometimes frustrating but continuously illuminating USA Rail Pass circle of North America, a trip begun just after the worst of the great storms of late January and early February had begun to wane. The trip found Amtrak in good shape in terms of basic on-board services, but barely making do in the essential areas of schedule coordination, yard service, and public information.

I report the above with no pleasure. Previous extended Amtrak trips in May and October of 1976 found the trains running on time, properly staffed, with courteous personnel and a considerable degree of pride and spirit showing in employee-customer relationships. On the surface, nothing should have changed merely because of the SDP40F- and winter-related troubles. Amtrak was, in many ways, not responsible for the disastrous winter of 1976-77, but the corporation's remarkable silence on the subject of remedies for the delay disaster and its astounding decision to discontinue paying for accommodations for travelers stranded due to missed connections, caused a serious welling-up of customer discontent. The resultant anger was translated into passengers' verbal abuse of employees, who responded with surly, boorish service in kind, and the on-train atmosphere in February of 1977 was more reminiscent of the bad days of 1969 than of the supposedly pro-passenger attitudes of the Amtrak of 1977.

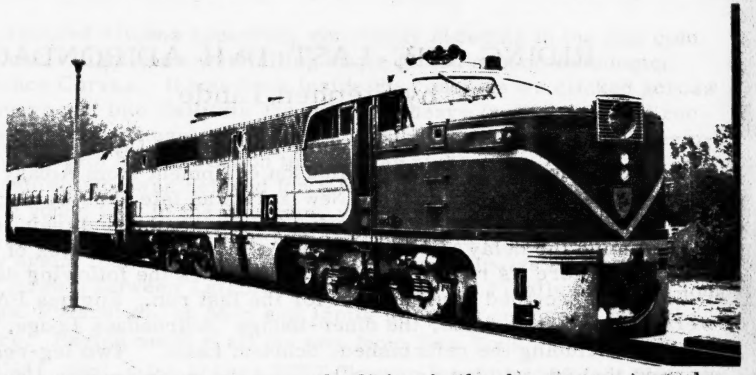
Given Amtrak's loss of dozens of long-distance cars in the sub-zero Midwestern cold, basic on-train services were holding up fairly well. All trains carried meal and beverage cars, all trains ran (surprisingly) reasonably close to schedule, as I studiously avoided the BN and Midwestern ConRail lines, and with the notable exception of one train, all services were generally kept clean.

In order to avoid the endlessly-delayed SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, my trip began on a warm Feb 10 evening at Trinidad, Colorado. The Santa Fe, somehow able to maintain a reasonable modicum of its schedules despite supposedly SDP40F-caused delays, had train 4, the SOUTHWEST LIMITED, on time at Raton, but the train arrived 50 minutes late at Trinidad due to the severing of a steam line on Raton Pass, caused by a metal park breaking loose on the undercarriage of the lead mail car.

Number 4 was running full, but short, with two hi-level coaches, two Chicago sleepers, the New York car, and due to weather damage, a flattop Santa Fe dorm-lounge and flattop diner.

The passengers were in a surly mood. Several had been delayed 24 hours in Los Angeles due to a late COAST STARLIGHT, and forced to pay for their lodging, and the delay to the SOUTHWEST LIMITED caused them to grumble. Seven passengers for the just-reinstated BLUE WATER LIMITED were worrying about their Chicago connection, but were assured by the Santa Fe conductor that Number 4 should make up enough time to make the connection. Sadly, such was not to be the case. The damaged baggage car had to be cut out at Kansas City, and even tho the consolidation with the LONE STAR at K.C. did not occur, the SOUTHWEST LIMITED was 90 minutes late leaving K.C.

The run to Fort Madison, hampered by the constant curves of the Missouri Ozark Hills, saw no time gained, but between Fort Madison and Chicago the LIMITED made up over a half-hour and arrived in Chicago at 3:26pm.



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The BLUE WATER left Chicago on time at 3:25pm, thus assuring that seven passengers would never ride Amtrak again. A call to hold the connection had been made, but the Amtrak staff in Chicago purported to know nothing about it. Ironically, several Amtrak reps were on the platform in Chicago claiming that the 3:30pm BROADWAY was waiting for the passengers from the Santa Fe. That, of course, was nonsense, as the BROADWAY had not left Chicago on time for a long while, and had no trouble in making the Number 4 connection that day without being "held."

The bar attendant on #4 had been unhappy all the way. Not only had car 3393 been improperly stocked in Los Angeles, but also he was having trouble getting the doors to lock, and feared thefts during the night. His unhappiness was accompanied by silent and visibly distracted service to his customers, altho he was never rude. A better than 30-year veteran from the New York Central, this man was basically upset at being unable to provide a proper level of service to his passengers, but he showed his unhappiness via the "company doesn't give a damn" school of rail employee talk. Comments about the attitude of management being inattentive translate to the average passenger as most unsettling evidence that the customer's business is not wanted.

I do not mean to condemn this man. In talking to him at length after the lounge had cleared out, I was told the sad old stories of bad-order reports ignored, supplies not provided, and direction never seeming to come from headquarters except in the form of impersonal written excuses. Amtrak undoubtedly does care that its employees be provided adequate supplies, functional cars, and proper support, and Amtrak undoubtedly is hampered in that effort by old cars, but the railroad yard habit, especially in Chicago, of never making repairs in a reasonable time of properly reported car defects, and of never explaining why those defects were not fixed, does lead to real dissatisfaction.

The dining car crew was polite, if inefficient. The steward failed to seat anyone. Passengers were directed to their seats by waiters pointing from the far end of the car, and the elusive steward refused to accept a check despite proper I.D. being offered. However, the food was delicious, attractively and otherwise courteously served.

Not wishing to be a victim of the Amtrak-guaranteed missed connections at Chicago, I spent the night on an Amtrak Holiday Inn Package in South Bend.

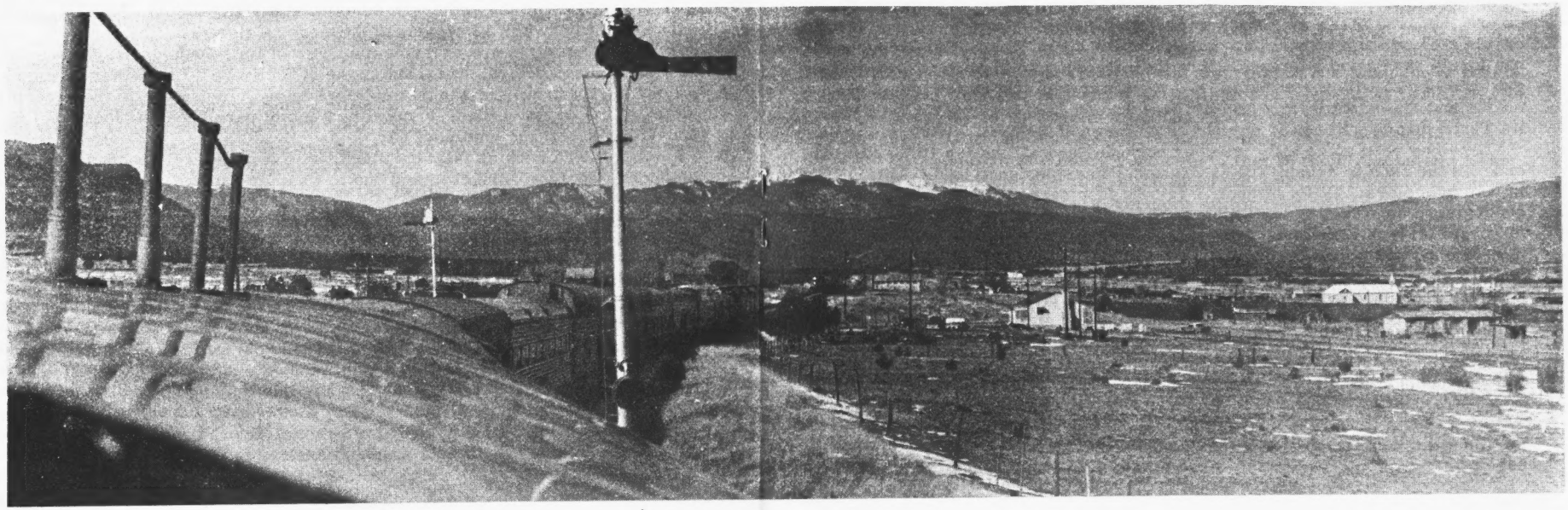
The JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY, the wandering, lost child of Amtrak's Midwestern services, seems at last at home on the former C&O line out of Chicago. A 3-car Number 50, all Amfleet, awaited its passengers on Feb 12. I suppose one should lament the lack of sleepers on this overnight route, and many have been critical of the Amfleet, especially for overnight services; but after this ride on the RILEY, I must demur. The public, who far more than railfans must be the object of Amtrak's attention, loves this equipment. Even tho only one car on #50 had leg rests, and that car was not opened at Cincinnati, even tho the car carried only six passengers, and even tho the Amdinette had its usual limited menu, passenger response to this train was universally favorable.

Several businessmen boarded at Cincinnati to ride to Washington on real business. Such men are not the daily long-haul bread of this route any longer, but these travelers, who had originally planned to travel first class, loved the RILEY, repeatedly praised the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountain scenery coming into Charlottesville, and announced their immediate plans to return via the same route. None had been on a train in years. Other passenger comments included praise for the Amdinette's reasonable food prices, delight at both the dinette's tables and the at-your-seat tables, and hope that the fixed arm rests would be removed.

C&O crews were extremely pleased with the new cars, and expressed the hope that when sleepers returned, the Amfleet would also stay (The NIGHT OWL proves that that is possible).

One negative point must be noted. The seemingly incompetent Chicago yard crews had not stocked the RILEY with any pillows since the Amfleet arrived a week before. Repeated crew requests for same had brought no response.

The slow order for bad track on the New River subdivision put the RILEY into Washington a half-hour late, but most C&O track, especially in Indiana, was feather smooth, at least as experienced from the quiet atmosphere of



The two SOUTHWEST LIMITEDS meet somewhere near Lamy, New Mexico and pause while the dispatcher negotiates them by each other. As seen from the dome of train 3. Photo by Message Media.

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Not wishing to be a victim of the Amtrak-guaranteed missed connections at Chicago, I spent the night on an Amtrak Holiday Inn Package in South Bend.

The JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY, the wandering, lost child of Amtrak's Midwestern services, seems at last at home on the former C&O line out of Chicago. A 3-car Number 50, all Amfleet, awaited its passengers on Feb 12. I suppose one should lament the lack of sleepers on this overnight route, and many have been critical of the Amfleet, especially for overnight services; but after this ride on the RILEY, I must demur. The public, who far more than railfans must be the object of Amtrak's attention, loves this equipment. Even tho only one car on #50 had leg rests, and that car was not opened at Cincinnati, even tho the car carried only six passengers, and even tho the Amdinette had its usual limited menu, passenger response to this train was universally favorable.

Several businessmen boarded at Cincinnati to ride to Washington on real business. Such men are not the daily long-haul bread of this route any longer, but these travelers, who had originally planned to travel first class, loved the RILEY, repeatedly praised the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountain scenery coming into Charlottesville, and announced their immediate plans to return via the same route. None had been on a train in years. Other passenger comments included praise for the Amdinette's reasonable food prices, delight at both the dinette's tables and the at-your-seat tables, and hope that the fixed arm rests would be removed.

C&O crews were extremely pleased with the new cars, and expressed the hope that when sleepers returned, the Amfleet would also stay (The NIGHT OWL proves that that is possible).

One negative point must be noted. The seemingly incompetent Chicago yard crews had not stocked the RILEY with any pillows since the Amfleet arrived a week before. Repeated crew requests for same had brought no response.

The slow order for bad track on the New River subdivision put the RILEY into Washington a half-hour late, but most C&O track, especially in Indiana, was feather smooth, at least as experienced from the quiet atmosphere of

The two SOUTHWEST LIMITEDS meet somewhere near Lamy, New Mexico and pause while the dispatcher negotiates them by each other. As seen from the dome of train 3. Photo by Message Media. page 13

the Amfleet. The RILEY was packed from White Sulphur Springs into Washington, and had one and one-half cars full out of Chicago. While Amtrak certainly needs to serve Indianapolis, some notice must be made of the heavy patronage of this train at Peru, Marion and Muncie. A slow schedule into Indianapolis, with associated increased terminal costs, is not necessarily preferable to the C&O thru Indiana. The heavy use of the RILEY at totally unmanned stations on the C&O bespeaks a fine level of support for passenger trains--and this was the first on-time run after weeks of horribly delayed trains.

The 3pm Metroliner from Washington to New York was oddly less impressive than the Amfleet. I have never appreciated the total lack of hot food in Metroliner coaches, and Amtrak's failure to correct this is unfortunate. The Metrocoaches are also a bit shabby after a decade of heavy use, with the lack of tables also annoying. Moreover, the soft suspension of these cars now gives a very rough ride on the William Coleman-induced rough stretches of the Northeast Corridor, and the unlamented Secretary of Transportation saw to it that most of the Corridor, at least south of New York, has gotten very rough. While the thrill of a 110mph ride from Baltimore to Wilmington is still a railfan's delight, the unrelated thrill of violent lurches near Capitol Beltway, and the Metroliner's 15-minute delay caused entirely by track-related slow orders, were discouraging. On a positive note, not one passenger seemed to notice the delays, and the atmosphere on the train was quiet, satisfied, and normal. Still, while no complaints were heard about 15-minute delays, other Metroliners regularly run much later, and customer discontent must follow. Also, the rough track on the Corridor was noticed, and IS really quite bad. Hopefully the Carter DOT will honor its pledge to move rapidly on the previously deliberately delayed upgrade. While Amtrak played no part in the decision to sabotage the project last summer, riders blame that Coleman decision on Amtrak, not on Ford's friend of the rubber tire and the SST.

The Feb 15 schedules showed the Amtrak-D&H ADIRONDACK converted to a Turboliner, but a final run out of New York of the beautifully-maintained D&H-equipped ADIRONDACK was necessary on the 15th in order to ferry equipment upstate, and so I had an unplanned second farewell to the D&H diners. In 1967 these cars had belonged to the Rio Grande, and I had a memorable ride on them on the last runs of the PROSPECTOR. The cars then had lovely hard wood interiors. Now they are done up in elegant browns, gold and blues, with the striking D&H motif carried thru on the china, the menus and the exteriors. While Amfleet was an improvement on the C& O, its Turbo cousin will not be any real step forward here.

There has been some silly jealousy between Amtrak and the D&H. Amtrak ordered the D&H to repaint the ex-Wabash domes assigned to the ADIRONDACK in Amtrak colors. D&H's attractive female food servers reported Amtrak supervisors confiscating D&H menus (hopefully to copy them!), last May, but the basic level of service on this train, except during periods when the diners have broken down, has been remarkable. The D&H has diner menus offering inventive, entirely cooked-to-order food, at reasonable prices. Mashed potatoes are seasoned, flounder is served with a cheese and wine sauce, the minute steak comes out smothered with onions, while the turkey sandwich can be obtained with a delicious cheese sauce. At breakfast, hash is offered. Recorded music works, and circulates throughout the diner and several coaches properly equipped. Not only is a mile-by-mile descriptive folder given out, but the D&H issues a Southern Railway-styled packet containing a PA postcard, a list of top-flight Montreal restaurants, and a price list for D&H souvenirs, including the diner's handsome plates.

Passengers on the ADIRONDACK accept this--in 1977--amazingly spiffy service with obvious pleasure, but even more impressive is their sense that such service is normal. Passengers who are regulars simply enjoy the service and devote the bulk of their comment to pointing out favorite sights along the stunning D&H line past Lake Champlain.

The Turbos drew their usual crowds along the D&H when displayed, but will not be able to run at really high speeds ever north of Albany, and can not be called clearly superior to the impeccable D&H-equipped ADIRONDACK. They will return parlor service to a route which, at least in summer, traditionally supported it well into the late 1960s; but the lack of any lounge or table dining areas, the loss of the D&H diner crews (who are being transferred to Amtrak's general Grand Central roster), and the lack of domes will not be a real improvement on this route. D&H officials were not happy with the change, but the sponsoring New York State DOT was adamant, and so after March 1 north of Albany one vestige of non-standardized service would be gone. It seems a shame.

Diner-starved Amtrak may have leased the D&H diners, at least until more Amfleet cars arrive, for the NIAGARA RAINBOW. Both D&H and Amtrak diner crews on #69 had heard that. A little over a year ago the D&H had temporarily cut its diners off at Albany to insure proper maintenance. The #69 of the 15th was proof of the reality of D&H fears that Amtrak cannot, or will not, supervise its New York yard crews. The car wash had broken down at Grand Central, but 69 had received no cleaning, either inside, or by hand of the window exteriors in New York the previous evening. Cars were absolutely filthy--ashes on the floors, windows (all glass on the D&H) splotched, and toilets not restocked. A D&H supervisor who boarded at Albany was vocally disgusted, and the southbound 68, passed near Saratoga due to track work-caused delays, was clean, so the CPR was clearly still performing well in Montreal.

Track work to upgrade the river line was underway, and a sawing move was needed between Poughkeepsie and Rhinecliff, with further delays before Hudson; but when the work is done the new Turbos should really fly from New York to upstate points. While Amtrak refuses to adjust completely schedules west of Chicago, New York-to-Buffalo timings have been reasonably padded to reflect the work underway, and good loads were observed at all points to Albany. The ADIRONDACK dropped most of its rear-car passengers at Albany, but quite a crowd replaced them; and at Whitehall a hundred school kids boarded and rode to Plattsburgh--a yearly trip sponsored by a pro-passenger D&H employee to promote the ADIRONDACK as much as to chaperone the kids.

Temperatures in the 30s and partly cloudy skies made the day tolerable, but snow depths north of Albany were over 3 feet in most places and Lake Champlain was frozen over to a depth of 40 inches. Hundreds of ice houses dotted the lake, and the hills of Vermont glimmered faintly in the distance at sunset. It was, as always, enchanting. A long customs check at Lacolle delayed Montreal arrival until 8pm, but the cooperative CPR, showing little of its oft-attributed anti-passenger policies, allowed the D&H to stop outside of Montreal at Delson, and there stopped the ATLANTIC LIMITED for the convenience of the three reported passengers for New Brunswick.

From Trinidad to Montreal no Amtrak train had run on time, nor badly late. One had been filthy, but except on the SOUTHWEST LIMITED, most passengers had seemed satisfied. Unsettling evidence of poor supervision had cropped up repeatedly, but the trip had been generally a good one. In many respects it would remain so, but the fruits of some Amtrak management mistakes would reveal themselves in ways which Amtrak must address now, before the crowds of summer.

A POSSIBLE FAREWELL TO THE INTERURBAN
by Carl H. Fowler

On the eve of its potential demise, Chicago's South Shore Line, the last interurban in America, proved to be in remarkably good condition.

The 5:18pm express to South Bend left on time, filled. Its five cars were a fascinating mixture of former combines, a retired lounge coach still equipped with a few parlor seats, and full coaches featuring some modern, if shabby, plastic seats, and other deep plush interurban originals. There were 5 cars going as far as the CSS&SB shops in Michigan City. There the rear three were cut off, and only coach 22 and combine 117 continued to South Bend.

While the train left Randolph Street on time, it was delayed for 5 minutes by sloppy ICG dispatching within 50 feet of the station, waiting for an ICG suburban train that took the full 5 minutes to pull into the station. The 5:18 run has the hottest schedule on the South Shore, serving basically as a Gary express, and no time was made up enroute. Somber discontinuance notices plastered the walls of all stations and some cars, altho colorful "Save Our South Shore" buttons on the coats of many passengers bespoke their determination to fight for the road's survival.

To a man, the crews of the two trains I rode felt the train-off was very reluctantly filed--that the parent Chessie had forced the South Shore to call the bluff of stalling Indiana and its five northern counties, areas which had forced the South Shore to run as the only Chicago-area commuter road without a subsidy. The train-off, the crews felt, was designed to finally trigger both a subsidy and new equipment funding.

It was 50 degrees on Feb 11 in Chicago, but three runs had been off for a week due to equipment shortages caused by the cold. The old interurbans are absolutely worn-out, and even the meticulous, ingenious maintenance of the Michigan City Shop could not keep them going much longer.

Signs were mixed as to whether the needed aid would come. The conductor of Saturday inbound train 462 reported that only the Gary area was still refusing to join in the subsidy, but support by the State of Indiana was dependent on the unanimous cooperation of all affected counties, so the holdout could spell the end. No hints had slipped out of the ICC.

The 6:40am departure from South Bend on Saturday was a fascinating opportunity to view operations by day. The high-speed track east of Michigan City was traversed at a constant 60mph running speed, with stops slowing the overall average from South Bend to Michigan City to around 45mph. Track was smooth, and the passing sidings, altho obviously not used for years except for storage, were fully wired and in good shape.

The street running thru Michigan City evokes few looks from residents. One wonders how many of them are aware that they are daily witnesses to the passing of the last interurban electric railway in North America? History there is a commonplace and few seem to notice. Fortunately, they do seem to ride. A good crowd boarded at Michigan City's streetfront station, and beyond Gary the train was full.

West of Michigan City the South Shore looks far more prosperous. The passing sidings are shiny, altho only freights are passed on the present slow schedule before the double track west of Gary. Little platforms, with simple sheds, are the only station buildings from Michigan City into Gary, but at Tremont six passengers boarded.

One of the 3 remaining "Little Joe" freight electrics sat on a storage track at the Gary station. While leased C&O Geeps are making inroads on South

Shore freight operations, and will obviously handle everything if electric passenger service ends, one of these beautiful engines was spotted that afternoon handling a long freight on the viaduct outside of Hammond.

West of Gary the South Shore reaches rapid transit standards in places, its track often elevated on viaducts and mostly double-track. No. 462 held precisely to its schedule as far as the ICG junction, and arrived two minutes early at Randolph Street.

The South Shore Line is a well-run, surprisingly efficient railroad. Its potential in industrialized, auto-strangled northern Indiana, especially in the face of the pending demise of the ConRail Valparaiso commuter trains, should be excellent. Hopefully Indiana will respond with long-overdue aid.

Mixed Train of Thoughts

NORTHEAST CORRIDOR RECONSTRUCTION project officially began on Mar 31--one year from our Washington visit at the time of ConRail's turning over the Corridor to Amtrak, a move that was long but unsuccessfully blocked by former Transportation Secretary Coleman (see RTN, 2nd Mar 1976). Actual construction work started on Apr 4, however. Amtrak also announced on Apr 1 the beginning of track upgrading on the Chicago-Detroit route (with work also starting Apr 4). Improved will be 46 miles of line between Kalamazoo and Niles, Michigan, part of 83 miles of rail between Michigan City and Kalamazoo that were conveyed to Amtrak from Penn Central when ConRail took over Apr 1, 1976. Work will increase speeds from the present 60mph to 79mph. Amtrak will spend $2.7 million on the project, and the state $2.3 million, to lay over 60,000 crossties, do resurfacing, etc. About 75 people have been hired to work on the Michigan reconstruction project.....

* * *

AMTRAK'S BOARD MEETING of Mar 30 was the first opened to the public under the new "sunshine laws." Amtrak said it would open the meetings even tho it was still unclear whether the law required it of the rail corporation..... AMTRAK'S SDP40F ENGINES were discussed at the Mar 30 Board meeting, and a program approved to modify 40 of them to essentially rebuild them into an F40-like configuration. They will get new car bodies, frames, trucks and fuel tanks, and will be equipped with head-end electric power generators to power Amtrak's new all-electric passenger cars. It is not known what model designation the resulting locomotives will receive. Amtrak said the engines involved are part of its second order of 110 such locomotives from EMD, engines that are now due for their 500,000-mile overhaul. Work will be performed at General Motors' EMD division and is to be finished by late autumn..... EXTREMELY HEAVY RAINS in the Appalachian region caused the MOUNTAINEER to be annulled effective Apr 6 and buses run instead between Norfolk and Bluefield, connecting to Charleston WV to connect with the RILEY. The stations at Welch and Williamson were under flood waters, and the highway was out also. Flooding began Apr 4 and caused some disruption of MOUNTAINEER service, and later the complete annulment of the train, expected to continue a few days...

* * *

AMTRAK'S FEBRUARY RIDERSHIP, in some preliminary figures (full data not released yet) found no essential change from Feb 1976--an increase of less than 1,000. A main reason for this was the annulment of much long distance service and the poor timekeeping on BN routes (the EMPIRE BUILDER ridership was down 18%, the NORTH COAST HIAWATHA down 32%, the S.F. ZEPHYR off 11%). The COAST STARLIGHT, which managed to maintain reasonable schedules with the slowed-engines problem, saw no fall in ridership, but an increase of 21% over Feb 1976. Long distance ridership fell off 9%, and short distance was up 3%. Amtrak carried 45,642 riders

on its SAN DIEGAN route this Feb, compared with 25,310 last year--an increase of 80%..... THE PANAMA LIMITED, southbound on Mar 28 at Hernando MS, traveling between 65 and 70mph, struck a road grader, injuring the vehicle's operator. Damage to engine 700 (a GE P30 diesel) was about $2800. The train was delayed 2hrs, 10 mins by the wreck, which happened at 10:23am. The consist of the northbound train the day before was engine 700, cars 1370, 21848, 21851, 21850, 20213, 21238, and 21208; presumably the train of the 28th was similar..... A BERKELEY READER, G. W. Olmsted, sends us a clipping from the Mainichi Daily News of Tokyo, dated Mar 11. It relates how a Bullet Train was halted by a roll of toilet paper that dropped from a passing truck and became wound around the overhead wires. The incident happened Mar 10, and Mr. Olmsted says "I rode this train on the day of the problem, and in spite of the difficulties, I found the ride quite comfortable, but somewhat crowded. Three and two seating makes the seats too narrow for my 6'2" frame." He found the 16 cars filled all the way to Osaka, on one of 8 trains per hour, and the dining car and "tea room" small and crowded: "Altho this may be the fastest train in the world, it is not long on luxury".....

* * *

SOME RGZ NEWS: the dome observation car "Silver Sky" returned to service on the Rio Grande Mar 3 out of Denver, after rebuilding into a full lounge car. Bedroom nearest the vestibule was converted to a large toilet room for handicapped. In the new lounge area a lowered ceiling has been installed with a type of vinyl material, and vinyl on the walls. The lounge seats about 14 persons. Rio Grande published a new schedule card Feb 3, with Price, Utah discontinued as a station stop. The railroad is asking for exemptions for station services at Bond, CO. Crew members are predicting increased business for the train when the PIONEER begins Seattle-Salt Lake operation on Jun 7. A wag suggests that RGZ stands for "Real Glass Zephyr"--with virtually no Lexan on the domed train. Train 18 has been running a half hour late each trip due to track work, mostly in Utah, but some east of Grand Junction..... USA RAIL PASS prices will increase again this summer, starting May 16. The 14-day pass, now $165, will be $290 May 16-Aug 31. The 21-day pass goes from $220 to $365, and the 30-day from $275 to $450. USA Rail Passes sold overseas will continue at current rates thru Oct 31. Lower off-season prices for those sold in U.S. and Canada are expected again this fall.....

* * *

THE MOUNTAINEER'S FATE is appearing bleaker. An article outof Washington after the Mar 30 Amtrak Board meeting reported that DOT Sec'y Adams, apparently present at the meeting, that he would discontinue the train now except that he is waiting for the public comment he called for, and will make a decision by Apr 30. There was talk that Amtrak and West Virginia congressmen would favor re-routing the train--perhaps starting May 1--to run from Washington to Roanoke via Richmond and Petersburg, then following the present MOUNTAINEER route westward. Ridership on the train was said to average only 35 daily..... THE SPRING FLOODS that disrupted MOUNTAINEER service covered a large area, and halted the INTER-AMERICAN at Longview TX for 5hrs Mar 28 on its northbound run. On Mar 27 the two PANAMA LIMITEDs were stopped by floods near Makanda IL and passengers were bused around the spot. A Continental Trailways bus was stranded in Missouri..... THE CANADIAN LRC has been tested twice in two weeks in March on Amtrak's mainline Boston-New Haven (ex-NH Shore Line) by Amtrak and a team from the Batelle Memorial Institute of Columbus OH. Tests collected data on the train's forces upon curved, superelevated track at increasing speeds. More info later..... A NEW RESTAURANT will open this summer in the refurbished New London CT Amtrak station.....

SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR is no longer picking up cars at Denver, thus eliminating dome service completely. BN has put a few SFZ's into Denver near to schedule recently, but delays remain the general rule, and passengers still complain of freight train interference..... THRU MIAMI-CHICAGO coach is back on the FLORIDIAN, but the thru sleeper still is not.....

NORTHEAST CORRIDOR REBUILDING--some more details: The official opening of work took place at 9:30am on Mar 31 at Stony Run near Baltimore, with Transportation Secretary Brock Adams and Amtrak President Paul Reistrup officiating. Remarked Adams: "I said we would get the track work started by Apr 1 even if I had to get out with a pick and shovel myself. With machinery a bit more sophisticated than the pick and shovel and the help of Amtrak, we are going to begin on time, as promised." The Stony Run project involves an 18-man surfacing and welding crew and is the forerunner of larger track gangs that were to start work Apr 4 in Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Maryland. The $1.75 billion project is to be completed in 1981.....

EASTBOUND SOUTHWEST LIMITED was rocked Mar 27 near L.A.'s Figueroa Street, and windows were broken in cars 9973, 9902, and 2638 "Pacific Trail". The train arriving at Kansas City Mar 29 dropped off private car CME-300 "Silver Foot", Chicago Medical's sleeper-lounge..... ROCK ISLAND PASSENGER service will be taken over by Amtrak provided the state of Illinois agrees to finance needed track repairs on the line to allow 60mph speeds, and to construct a connection between the Santa Fe and the Rock Island for Chicago-Peoria service. Amtrak reportedly agreed to the terms late in March. Amtrak would pay for the connecting track project.....

* * *

BOOK REVIEW DEPARTMENT: With the publication of Passenger Train Journal's Passenger Train Annual No. 2, that publisher takes a big step toward establishing itself as a major publisher of fine contemporary rail photography books. The new book, just out, is both much better than last year's Annual and also cheaper--$5.95 (add 55¢ postage, and tax in Illinois, from: PTJ Publishing Inc., PO Box 397, Park Forest, IL 60466.) A color section has been added, to make a book that's fun to flip thru and leave on your coffee table. Rand McNally's "1977 National Park Guide" now includes information on reaching the parks by rail (where possible). A small section, "The Tracks Are Back," describes the Amtrak routes that reach national parks. But the maps don't show rail routes. The 212-page softbound book is $5.95 in book stores (11th annual edition)..... AMTRAK'S CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS will move from L'Enfant Plaza to a location across the mall from Washington Union Station--at 400 North Capitol Street. While Amtrak's computer facilities will remain at "Elephant Plaza", the other departments will gradually change locations, with Marketing going first in late summer or early fall. By Aug 1978 the move should be complete. Amtrak approved the change at its Feb board meeting..... THE GG-1 LOCOMOTIVE to be restored to its original paint scheme was, last we heard, just about at its financial goal. The "Friends of the GG-1" collected the money to present to Amtrak. The engine will see regular operation on the Corridor--it won't go into a museum, as we earlier reported. Engine 4935 will be publicly presented at Washington Union Station May 14 and go into service on the MURRAY HILL the next day...

* * *

GREYHOUND BUS COMPANY continues its anti-Amtrak campaign, with a recent diatribe in Dunn's Review. Prompted by this, Amtrak President Paul Reistrup visited Greyhound head Kerrigan in Phoenix near the end of March to try to reach a detente and to find out for himself what's going on. Unfortunately, Reistrup came away from the meeting convinced that Kerrigan will not change his ways. Reistrup brought him a 7-page letter arguing against his campaign, in which he said in part, "Only a child really believes the cost of a ticket pays for the cost of the

ride on any form of public transportation." Amtrak pointed out that the government has commited only $1 billion to Amtrak in five years, while $458 billion have gone into roads over the years, with $156 billion of that from general taxes.....

WASHINGTON UNION STATION patrons have a new restaurant to serve them--The Rail Head, with a railroad motif, open 24 hours daily, began operation recently.....

BROTHERHOOD OF RAILWAY and Airline Clerks filed demands Apr 1 for a new 3-year contract with increased benefits. The present one expires Dec 31. The head of the union threatened a nationwide strike if necessary..... ST. LOUIS STATION construction at a new location on Ewing Avenue will start very soon, Amtrak said. Missouri officials are unhappy at the move, claiming it will threaten the historical landmark status of Union Station..... THE BOSTON GLOBE reported in the Mar 23 edition that Sen. William Hathaway of Maine said that Amtrak will conduct a study of passenger rail transportation needs in Maine with an eye toward a possible experimental route..... ADIRONDACK RAILWAY CORPORATION is a newly-formed company that will rehabilitate an abandoned Penn Central line between Lake Placid and Remsen NY to make it into a recreational railway. Remsen has a ConRail connection from Utica. The Winter Olympics will be held at Lake Placid in 1980.....

* * *

AMTRAK TRAINS RUN regularly 2-2½ hours late on the Minneapolis-Chicago route, and a bit of a furor has arisen because Amtrak reservations clerks have neglected to inform passengers of the delays. The problem is bad track on the Milwaukee Road line, track which has deteriorated more this winter in the severe weather, and which cannot be repaired until the ground thaws. In addition, the railroad is short of maintenance funds and is applying to the government for a repair grant... TRANSPORTATION SECRETARY ADAMS will hold his next Town Meeting on Apr 20 in San Jose CA from 1-4pm in a location not yet announced. He expects to hear testimony from invited representatives of civic, minority, environment, and consumer groups on the nation's transportation needs. This will be his second such meeting.....

* * *

MORE AMTRAK TIMETABLE listings: the following Feb 15 timetables have appeared with printing dates later than the cover date: Forms 7 & 8 (printed Mar 4); and Forms 10 & 12 (printed Mar 10)..... THE EASTBOUND MOUNTAINEER was re-routed over ex-Virginian trackage between Roanoke and Burkeville because of track work on the N&W mainline for about 2 weeks in March, ending after Mar 24.....

ICG AND AMTRAK are reported in the talking stages over the possible sale of ICG tracks between Grenada Wye (Memphis TN) to North Jackson MS, a distance of about 330 miles. This 79mph line recently upgraded in lawsuits to 1971 standards, is used by Amtrak and only one ICG local freight and one piggyback train. The ICG claims it cannot afford to maintain high speed track which is not being used.....

THE APRIL ISSUE of Bicycling! magazine ($1 from Box 4450, San Rafael CA 94930) has an article on taking bicyles on Amtrak, reportedly a good 2-page article.....

IT FINALLY HAPPENED, after all this time: we saw an Amtrak ad on TV. Partly that's because we watch TV so little. At 10:30pm on Mar 26 during the channel 2 news a nice ad for the SAN JOAQUIN came on. The story line has the porter's mother boarding and embarrassing him by telling other passengers how nice her son's train is..... ARE YOU CONFUSED about the re-equipping of the ADIRONDACK? First the NY-Albany portion was Turbo-lized, and passengers changed trains at Albany. Mr. Fowler on p.14 describes the last all-conventional run. Later, the Turbos ran all the way NY-Montreal. Mr. Linde on p.9 describes the last run of D&H conventional cars before the Turbos took over completely..... T&P STEAM ENGINE 610, leased by Southern Rwy for summer excursions, ran under its own power from Ft. Worth to Birmingham AL on Mar 2-5, going Ft. Worth-Shreveport Mar 2, to Vicksburg Mar 3, to Meridian Mar 4, and to Birmingham Mar 5. SR opened the consist to passengers but not many showed up..... OREGON LEGISLATORS SAID that establishment of an Albany stop for the STARLIGHT had passed the "major hurdle".. THE SDP40F ENGINES to be rebuilt into F40-types are reportedly nos. 540-579.....

Rate the Trains

ANNOUNCING RTN'S FIFTH READER RATING SURVEY

Readers are invited to submit their ratings and comments on North American regularly scheduled passenger trains (not commuter) ridden between Jan 1 & Jun 30, 1977.

On the reverse of this page is a form for submitting ratings. You need not use the form--just write on a postcard or sheet of paper using your own format.

INSTRUCTIONS: Rate as many trains as you wish, but only those you have personally ridden this year. Rate each train on each of the 11 categories (A-K) below:

(A) Your impression of overall quality of service, taking all into account; (B) On-board personnel's service (except food-lounge personnel); (C) Food & lounge crew's service; (D) Food quality; (E) Car condition (cleanliness, repair, etc.); (F) Desirability of route it follows; (G) Station services; (H) Track condition; (I) Desirability of train's schedule; (J) Train promotion; (K) Type of cars used.

For your ratings, use the 9-point scale shown below. Please keep ratings separate from any other correspondence (on separate sheet, not separate envelope).

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9

Extremely poor — Average, acceptable — Extremely good

SEND YOUR RATINGS TO: Rail Travel News, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709. Thank you!

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Can we use your name? _____

TRAIN NAME & NUMBER	DATE RIDDEN	A Overall	B Non-food Crew	C Food Crew	D Food Quality	E Car Condition	F Routing	G Stations	H Track	I Scheduling	J Promotion	K Type of Cars	COMMENT SYMBOL*
													1
													2
													3
													4
													5
													6
													7
													8
													9
													10
													11
													12
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	

*COMMENTS: to add comments, copy circled number on separate sheet, write train name after it, followed by your comments.

See reverse of form for full instructions.

LETTERS (continued from page 2)

one on the D&RGW ZEPHYR from Grand Junction to Salt Lake City which was very interesting altho not "haphazard" and "spontaneous" in the same way as the poor MANHATTAN LIMITED. The rest of my travel in the U.S. and Canada which has involved many thousands of miles has been by bus both on national and on the smaller carriers. The major advantage of the bus was the availability of a single low fare ticket, the dense route network and the frequent service.

At present, I am considering returning to the U.S. for some more travel and visiting next summer. If I do, I think that I shall travel by train now that a pass ticket has been introduced.

James Killen
University of Dublin, Ireland

RTN has been giving me most up-to-date information as to your recovering system, Amtrak... In the First Jan issue you mention that in Mexico the 5 major railroads will merge into one company. I guess this will be NdeM. In future issues of RTN, "Rail Mexico" would be introduced like "Rail Canada." This is my wish--even a short half-page of information.

Takao Yamamoto
Osaka, Japan

John V. Fels (LETTERS, 2nd Feb RTN) is absolutely right. Your otherwise splendid publication is deeply and profoundly handicapped by your systematic neglect of Mexican rail service.

David Carter
Chico, California

John Pawson's letter (2nd Feb RTN) says that "contrary to what long-haul partisans tell us, few ride these trains between end points." That's true, but it misses the major role of long-haul trains. The bulk of the patronage is between end points and intermediate points, and between intermediates. You can't have that without having the long-haul train run all the way. That's equally true of many long distance bus and air schedules. The train, simply by an equipment mix, ideally serves both intermediate and end-to-end travel with the same instrument. To break up long distance routes into a smattering of isolated short-haul runs would be a horrendously costly logistics problem, and would kill the overlapping intermediate traffic.

Ray Hannon
Dallas, Texas

RAIL FANTRIPS

May 5-28: "South Africa Steam Safari"--Small group chasing steam trains by minibus. Land cost $425 plus air fare. Info: L.Y. Beaujon, 11073 Bel Aire Court, Cupertino CA 95014

May 15 & 22: 2 steam locos "Springtime in the Alleghenies" RT from Pittsburgh & Wilkinsburg PA. Adults $28.75. Open-window or regular coach. Info: Allegheny RR, Dept 16, PO Box G, East Akron Station, Akron OH 44305.

Apr 30 & May 1: 2 all-day steam trips Kent OH-Greenville PA & return. Ex-Reading 2102. Adults $19.50. Open-window or regular coach. Info: Allegheny RR (above).

May 14-15: Spring RR Festival, Calif. RR Museum, State Hwy 12 between Fairfield & Rio Vista. Streetcars, interurbans, Shay steam logging loco in operation. Pageant at 2:30. Adults $1.75, kids $1.00. Snacks, soft drinks available. Bring lunch.

May 21-22: NRHS excursion to Sequoia & Kings Canyon Nat. Parks, from SF/Oakland/Martinez via SAN JOAQUIN & bus. $75 ea. double occupancy, $85 single. Info from: NRHS Central Coast Chapter, PO Box 8407, San Jose CA 95155.

RTN's Rail Fantrips Dept. appears every issue while demand is heavy. One special event listing is free, subject to our editing. Send full info to: Rail Travel News, Fantrips Dept., P.O. Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

RTN'S RAIL TRAVEL YEARBOOK is not ready for mailing yet. Many thanks for the patience of all those who have ordered our first yearbook. We will announce the completion of the book in these pages as soon as it is ready.